

**Winter/ Spring Term 2023**

 **Theological Studies 250 Course Syllabus**

**Voices from the Wilderness:**

**A Historical and Theological Dialogue**

**Huron University College Land Acknowledgment**

Huron is situated on the traditional lands of the Anishinaabeg, Haudenosaunee, Attawandaron, and Lenape peoples, whose sharing and stewardship of the land has been governed by the Dish with One Spoon treaty since time immemorial. We are guided by this treaty in the spirit of peace, friendship, and respect. Huron University College acknowledges its past role in perpetuating colonial and exclusionary relations. Because religious and ecclesial institutions were instrumental in such relations, we consider it our particular responsibility as a Faculty of Theology to work towards justice and reconciliation.

**Course Dates:** Tuesdays, February 7th through March 14th, 2023

**Time:** 7 – 9 P.M. (CT), 8 – 10 P.M. (ET)

**Delivery:** Hosted via Zoom

**Instructor:** The Reverend Steve Greene and Irene Moore Davis with Guest Presenters

**Contact:** stevegreene@diohuron.org, irenemooredavis@gmail.com

**Course Description**

With the support of content experts of Black/African/Caribbean descent, participants will be introduced to the history of Black communities in Africa, the Caribbean, and Canada; ancient and pre-colonial African civilizations; Black voices in the scriptures and contributions of early Christians of African descent; colonization, the Transatlantic Slave Trade, and the construction of the concept of race; the historic involvement of Eurocentric Christian theology and institutions in not merely enabling but promoting racism, and the persistence of racist ideologies in the church today; the oppression and resistance of transplanted Black communities in the Americas; Christian faith traditions which have sustained African Diaspora communities and helped them to confront racism; and an overview of challenges facing Canadians of Black/African/Caribbean descent in the present. Particular attention is given to the ways in which church leaders and people of faith, through practical anti-racism efforts, can support siblings of Black/African/Caribbean descent within and beyond immediate faith communities as well as seek and serve Christ in all persons, strive for justice and peace among all people, respect the dignity of every human being, **seek to transform unjust structures of society, challenge violence of every kind, and pursue peace and reconciliation.**

**Course Objectives and Learning Outcomes**

At the end of this course, students will:

Identify key individuals of African descent in the Bible and their contributions

Describe the impact of people of African descent on the development of early Christianity

Identify how assumptions about Christianity have shaped the ways people of Black/African/Caribbean descent have been viewed and treated in western history and culture

Assess how religion, colonialism, and race have intersected in the history of Africa and the Americas and what the impact of those intersections have been

Evaluate how Christian ideas and practices, particularly belief in the “God of the oppressed,” have assisted Christians of Black/African/Caribbean heritage to critique racism and advocate for justice throughout various eras and locales

Identify the complex interactions between religious belief and practice and the historical, social, political, cultural, and economic context in which people understand and practice their faith

Develop critical awareness about interpretations of Christianity as they relate to whiteness and conversely, to Black lives

Develop the ability to critically analyze religion as a cultural phenomenon

Evaluate a variety of methods for both supporting Black/African/Caribbean siblings in Christ through intentional anti-racist efforts within the church and meaningfully extending anti-racist efforts beyond the church

Improve skills in critical reading, writing, thinking, and speaking

**Guest Presenters for this course will include:**

Brother Reginald Crenshaw, The Rev’d Michael Blair, The Rev’d Janaki Bandara and

The Right Rev’d Peter Fenty.

**Study Documents**

The Principal Text/Document for this course will be:

The Holy Bible - While the New Revised Standard Version is an excellent choice, other translations are welcomed.

Brief excerpts of other texts will also be made available digitally to course participants.

**Course Outline/Plan**

(Please note that this outline is tentative and subject to adjustment and change)

**Week 1 (February 7th, 2023)**

1. Ancient and Pre-Colonial African Civilizations, with Irene Moore Davis; Black Voices in the Scriptures and Contributions of Early Christians of African Descent, with Brother Reginald Crenshaw

**Week 2 (February 14th, 2023)**

1. Colonization, the Transatlantic Slave Trade, and the Invention of Race, with Irene Moore Davis; Acknowledging and Addressing Anti-Black Racism in the Church, Past and Present, with the Reverend Michael Blair

**Week 3 (February 21st, 2023)**

1. An Introduction to Black Canadian History, with Irene Moore Davis; How Black Faith Traditions Sustained Transplanted African Communities and Confronted Racism, with the Reverend Janaki Bandara

**Week 4 (February 28th, 2023)**

1. An Introduction to Afro-Caribbean History, with Irene Moore Davis; The Development of Afro-Caribbean Faith Traditions and Progress Towards Freedom, with the Right Reverend Peter Fenty

**Week 5 (March 7th, 2023)**

1. Black Canadian Experiences in the Twentieth Century and Now, with Irene Moore Davis; “Where Do We Go From Here?”, a discussion about fostering representation, equity, inclusion, belonging, and anti-racism in the church and beyond, with the Reverend Steve Greene and panelists; concluding remarks and resolution of remaining questions unanswered in the course

**Week 6 (March 14th, 2023)**

1. Practical Ministry Applications: a closing conversation around how the content covered in this course might be shared with others within our respective ministry contexts.

This conversation will be facilitated by the Rev. Steve Greene.

What does diversity look like within our ministry practices? Are there groups of people who face barriers as a result of the actions of our churches or our membership? What is our role in raising awareness and seeking new relationships towards eliminating racism, oppression and exclusion of individuals or groups of people who are different than those making up the membership of our communities. What existing resources might be available to us at the local, diocesan and national levels of Church?

**Method of Evaluation and Criteria for Grading** (only for students choosing to be evaluated for full course credit)

Two document studies (500 words each) and a Final Essay (1000 words) will be completed by each student seeking evaluation for full LTh credit.

1. Class Engagement/Participation – 20%

2. Reflection Paper #1 – 20% - due at 11:59 p.m. February 10th\*

3. Reflection Paper #2 – 20% - due at 11:59 p.m. February 24th\*

4. Final Essay – 40% - due at 11:59 p.m. March 10th

What have I learned in this course that I had not known before?

How will this new knowledge inform my day-to-day practices?

How do might I share the understandings within this course with my own congregational community?

\*Note: Questions to guide each reflection paper will be presented in the class discussions.

**Huron Grade Descriptors**

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| --- | --- | --- |
|  A+   |  90-100    |  One could scarcely expect better from a student at this level |
|  A |  80-89   |  Superior work which is clearly above average |
|  B |  70-79 |  Good work, meeting all requirements, and eminently satisfactory |
|  C |  60-69 |  Competent work, meeting requirements |
|  D   |  50-59 |  Fair work, minimally acceptable |
|  F |  below 50 |  Fail |

**Student Code of Conduct**

Membership in the community of Huron University College and Western University implies acceptance by every student of the principle of respect for the rights, responsibilities, dignity and well-being of others and a readiness to support an environment conducive to the intellectual and personal growth of all who study, work, and live within it. Upon registration, students assume the responsibilities that such registration entails. While in the physical or online classroom, students are expected to behave in a manner that supports the learning environment of others. Please review the Student Code of Conduct at: https://huronatwestern.ca/sites/default/files/Res%20Life/Student%20Code%20of%20Conduct%20-%20Revised%20September%202019.pdf.

**Statement on the Recording of Class Activities**

Students may not record or distribute any class activity, including conversations during office hours, without written permission from the instructor, except as necessary as part of approved accommodations for students with disabilities. Any approved recordings may only be used for the student’s own private use.

Online courses within the Licentiate in Theology Program are recorded for student engagement purposes. These recording are only used by the registered students of the class and made available through a restricted video hosting site to respect both privacy and intellectual property. Should a student be uncomfortable with this practice, they can contact the course instructor(s) or the LTh Program Director, Dr. Grayhame Bowcott at grayhame.bowcott@huron.uwo.ca.

**Support Services**

For advice on course selections, degree requirements, and for assistance with requests for medical accommodation, students should contact the LTh Program Director, Dr. Grayhame Bowcott at grayhame.bowcott@huron.uwo.ca.



THIS COURSE HAS BEEN [NOT YET BEEN] APPROVED BY HURON’S FACULTY OF THEOLOGY COMMITTEE

FOR THE WINTER TERM OF THE LTH PROGRAM, 2023.